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SUBJECT: CHARGE MARKS 25 YERAS OF USG AID; MEETS MANICA
MUSLIMS

REF: MAPUTO 806

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Charge's recent trip to Manica Province, located along the border with Zimbabwe, was the second in a series of visits planned to all of Mozambique's provinces to highlight USG funding successes. In a two-day visit, the Charge reviewed health and orphanage facilities supported by the USG, met with Zimbabwean refugees (reftel), consulted with key political leaders, conducted radio and newspaper interviews, delivered a speech at the provincial capital's leading university, and fielded probing questions from the region's Muslim leaders. While the visit was positive, significant additional outreach to the region's Muslim community is needed. End Summary.

25 YEARS OF USG SUPPORT

¶2. (SBU) The Charge raised awareness about USG assistance exceeding \$2.2 billion provided to Mozambique over the past 25 years and the anticipated \$2 billion of U.S. assistance Mozambique may see in the next five years through programs including MCC, PEPFAR, and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Surrounded by some 400 orphans, many of whose parents had been victims of HIV/AIDS, the Charge visited two neighborhood projects supported by USG funds in the provincial capital, Chimoio. He also inspected the district hospital. According to doctors, including the province's sole pediatrician, whose salaries are paid by Health Alliance International, a USAID partner, the facility sees more than 200 patients daily. The Charge attended the opening of a film featuring local actors dramatizing the health and interpersonal challenges posed by HIV-positive relationships. Funding for the film was provided through the Embassy's Pol/Econ section. Following the free screening, actors and community leaders helped conduct a debate among audience members designed to reinforce the film's lessons.

POLITICAL AND MEDIA OUTREACH

¶3. (SBU) In addition to meeting with Governor Mauricio Vieira, Chimoio Mayor Raul Conde, Catholic Bishop of Chimoio Dom Francisco Silota, and representatives of Manica City Mayor Mogueue Candieiro, the Charge completed interviews with Radio Mozambique, Radio Comunitaria Macequece, and the newspaper Diario de Mozambique. He also delivered a speech at Chimoio's Universidade Catolica to a group of some 200 journalists, students, faculty and citizens, challenging the GRM to act transparently and openly in all matters, particularly as an antidote to local corruption. The speech was followed by a question-and-answer period which extended the session beyond its scheduled two hours.

MUSLIMS LAUD OBAMA SPEECH; LEERY OF POLICY

14. (SBU) On June 23, in a frank meeting in Chimoio, capital of Manica, the Charge fielded a range of challenging questions from twelve local Muslim leaders invited to discuss President Obama's Cairo speech. Participants praised President Obama's words, but wondered aloud when they would be supported by action. Misinformation about U.S. actions and policies towards the Muslim world still abounds. The Charge was asked: to respond to an alleged internet report that the USG was redacting and desecrating the Holy Koran; why the Senate had rejected President Obama's effort to close the facility at Guantanamo Bay; how the USG managed to control media worldwide and why it had decided to use such control to foment anti-Arab feelings; why the USG was torturing and killing prisoners at Guantanamo Bay; why the USG equated terrorism with Islam; how a professed Christian nation could accept the killing of Arabs and why the USG invaded only Arab countries, such as Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan; why the USG supported only Israeli, and not Palestinian, interests in the Middle East and rejected a two-state solution.

OUTREACH EFFECTIVE, BUT MORE NEEDED

15. (SBU) Comment: In the Charge's second visit to the provinces in as many months, Post reinforced its key messages

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of 25 years of USG assistance and the importance of transparency. Telling the story of U.S. assistance in Mozambique provides valuable information to Mozambicans outside of the capital. Local Muslim leaders, questions reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of USG policy and U.S. citizen sentiment. The breadth of misinformation in the provinces is startling. The visit to Manica was an unqualified success: each side left with a better understanding of the other's concerns. But significant public diplomacy challenges remain, and Post will continue to engage audiences in Mozambique's ten provinces.

AMANI